

Rupley Building  
Victoria, Victoria County, Texas

HABS NO. Tex-280

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District # 6 Tex 2

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Birdsall P. Briscoe, District Officer  
4301 Main Street, Houston, Texas

RUPLEY BUILDING  
Victoria, Victoria County, Texas.

Owner: W. Heidrich, Yoakum, Texas and other heirs of the Martin Diegel Estate.

Date of erection: Begun in 1859 and completed in 1860.

Architect:

Builder:

Present Condition:

Number of Stories: Two stories.

Materials of Construction: Victoria brick.

Other Existing Records:

William R. Rupley the original owner of the building was a native of Pennsylvania and spent the last years of his life there. He owned extensive lands south of town now embraced in the Welder Ranch where the Old Rupley home still stands. Mr. Rupley's wife was the only daughter of Rafe Campbell of this city, deceased. Their daughter, Miss May Rupley became the wife of the late John K. Thompson, a Victorian planter, who was interested in mining operations in Arizona. Mr. Rupley's son, William R. Rupley Jr., and Mrs. Thompson inherited the Rupley estate. The son moving from Victoria to Houston. William R. Rupley Sr. was a member of the ill fated Mier expedition and although wounded succeeded in escaping.

The building is now occupied by the Dry Goods store of H. Goltzman, formerly of St. Louis, the son-in-law of Jacob Lazor of the Victoria Electric Shoe Shop, who located here six months ago. The remaining room on the lower floor of the old building has been the quarters of the Victoria meat market for many years. The upper story is conducted as an apartment house. During reconstruction days a number of Union army officers had their quarters in the old Abraham Levi home and when Mr. Levi returned from France late in 1865 or early 1866 and found them in possession of his residence he appealed to the authorities in Washington and finally succeeded in having them vacate it. The officers then made their headquarters in the Rupley building, which had previously housed a company of Federal troops.

The Rupley Building's architectural features can be found nowhere else save in New Orleans. The two-story iron porch at the back still stands but the one that once topped the front is no more. It was built probably for an hotel. There are stories to the effect that it was at one time a high-class gambling establishment. It is finished on the inside after the grand manner of New Orleans interiors. Decorative plaster cornices prevail and there are richly wrought central ceiling plagues from which nothing could have hung except crystal chandeliers. A broad stairway which winds after the French manner leads from a long, narrow lobby (also French) to the second floor. The doors are lofty, richly paneled, and through cloverly generations of paint and varnish one suspects them to be walnut or mahogany. For architectural embellishment on the main facade there were originally 6 6-pointed Tex's Stars. These were probably cast on the ground and then set in place. Only one remains. Its present condition is one of extreme squalor.

T.W. Sept. 1936